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## **1 – New Mexico: Air Force is violating state water law at Cannon AFB, NM Politics, 12/4/18**

<http://nmpoliticalreport.com/2018/12/04/new-mexico-air-force-is-violating-state-water-law-at-cannon-afb-en/#>

The New Mexico Environment Department announced today that Cannon Air Force Base near Clovis is violating the state's Water Quality Act and related ground and surface water regulations. The state agency issued a Notice of Violation, which requires the Air Force to create a plan to protect local dairies from contamination in the short-term and also evaluate the possibility of installing systems to treat contaminated water supplies.

## **2 – Coast Guard and Taylor Energy disagree over source of 14-year Gulf oil leak, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 12/5/18**

[https://www.nola.com/environment/2018/12/coast-guard-and-taylor-energy-disagree-over-source-of-14-year-gulf-oil-leak.html#incart\\_river\\_index](https://www.nola.com/environment/2018/12/coast-guard-and-taylor-energy-disagree-over-source-of-14-year-gulf-oil-leak.html#incart_river_index)

The U.S. Coast Guard isn't buying Taylor Energy's explanation about what's causing the oil company's 14-year-old leak in the Gulf of Mexico.

## **3 — Jefferson Parish landfill ID'd as source of River Ridge, Harahan stench, state says, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 12/5/18**

[https://www.nola.com/environment/2018/12/jefferson-parish-landfill-idd-as-source-of-river-ridge-harahan-stench-state-says.html#incart\\_most\\_shared-environment](https://www.nola.com/environment/2018/12/jefferson-parish-landfill-idd-as-source-of-river-ridge-harahan-stench-state-says.html#incart_most_shared-environment)

Jefferson Parish's landfill was officially identified Wednesday (Dec. 5) as the primary source of persistent odors plaguing River Ridge and Harahan. Still, no relief is guaranteed for residents sickened by the stench - and alarmed by mysterious particulates blowing into their neighborhoods.

## **4 – Ag Board considers emergency setback rules for poultry houses, Tulsa World, 12/6/18**

[https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/ag-board-considers-emergency-setback-rules-for-poultry-houses/article\\_5a66e348-eb03-5846-a6b7-4a70eff73a17.html](https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/ag-board-considers-emergency-setback-rules-for-poultry-houses/article_5a66e348-eb03-5846-a6b7-4a70eff73a17.html)

The Oklahoma Board of Agriculture is taking public comments online and is set Tuesday to vote on a set of proposed emergency regulations that, in part, would force new large poultry houses to be at least a quarter mile from someone's home or a half mile from a school or incorporated city limits.

## **5 — EPA proposed approval of state haze plan, Newton County (AR) Times, 12/5/18**

[http://newtoncountytimes.com/news/epa-proposed-approval-of-state-haze-plan/article\\_905206f4-f709-11e8-b7dc-333ca5facbcb.html](http://newtoncountytimes.com/news/epa-proposed-approval-of-state-haze-plan/article_905206f4-f709-11e8-b7dc-333ca5facbcb.html)

The Region 6 Office of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed approval of key portions of the State's Regional Haze plan. The plan, which includes agreements to limit sulfur dioxide and particulate emissions, was signed by Arkansas's key utility partners: Entergy Arkansas, Inc., Southwestern Electric Power Company, and Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Corporation.

## **6 — Trump Aims to Lift Hurdle to Coal Plants No One Wants to Clear, Bloomberg, 12/6/18**

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-12-06/trump-aims-to-lift-hurdle-to-coal-plants-no-one-wants-to-clear>  
The Trump administration is removing a key barrier to constructing new coal-fired power plants in the U.S. -- but don't expect any utilities to actually build them.

**7 – OPINION: In southern Dallas, a toxic Superfund site where answers remain years away, Dallas Morning News, 12/4/18**

<https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/commentary/2018/12/04/southern-dallas-toxic-superfund-site-answers-remain-years-away>

This is the first in what I can only assume will be a series about a piece of toxic land in southern Dallas. I say the first because the Environmental Protection Agency is only now preparing a plan to study the ground and water at the site of Lane Plating Works, a name that has become an obscenity to people who live nearby.

**8 – EPA: Fish damage from mine spill limited, Albuquerque Journal, 12/5/18**

<https://www.abqjournal.com/1254255/epa-fish-damage-from-mine-spill-limited.html>

Fish and other aquatic life did not suffer severe or long-lasting damage from a mine waste spill three years ago that polluted rivers in three states, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said.

**9 – State Plant Board ready, again, to debate dicamba, Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 12/6/18**

<https://www.nwaonline.com/news/2018/dec/06/state-plant-board-ready-again-to-debate/>

The state Plant Board expects a full house today when it again considers how, or whether, dicamba can be sprayed on soybeans and cotton next year. The board will consider two proposals: allowing the herbicide's use, with some restrictions, through June 15, or banning its sale and use.

**10 – Regulators' Dicamba Angst, DTN, 12/6/18**

<https://www.dtnpf.com/agriculture/web/ag/news/crops/article/2018/12/04/confusion-frustration-display-state>

State pesticide regulators confronted EPA representatives over the new dicamba registrations for XtendiMax, FeXapan and Engenia in a public regulatory meeting on Monday, Dec. 3.

**11 – Proposed \$8.5 billion Plaquemines LNG terminal and pipeline faces environmental review, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 12/6/18**

<https://www.nola.com/environment/2018/12/proposed-85-billion-plaquemines-lng-terminal-and-pipeline-faces-environmental-review.html>

Among thickets of prickly pear and pecan trees 20 miles south of downtown, a bizarre chapter in Texas water law involving a catfish farm and its infamously abundant well finally is being capped — literally.

**12 – New Leander ISD buses powered by propane, equipped with air conditioning, KXAN, 12/4/18**

<https://www.kxan.com/news/local/williamson-county/new-leander-isd-buses-powered-by-propane-equipped-with-air-conditioning/1638974907>

Two dozen brand new school buses in the Leander Independent School District are better for the environment and cheaper to run. And while it's not needed this time of year, parents should be happy to hear they came equipped with air conditioning.

**13 – Wildlife Advocates Want Ban On 'Cyanide Bombs', KUNM, 12/6/18**

<http://www.kunm.org/post/wildlife-advocates-want-ban-cyanide-bombs>

The public can now weigh in on whether to ban controversial 'cyanide bombs' that federal officials use for wildlife control. The 'cyanide bombs' are called M44's and they're used to kill wild animals that harm livestock. The EPA is reviewing the use of cyanide in wildlife management, and advocates want to see it banned.

**ENVIRONMENT**

December 4, 2018

# **New Mexico: Air Force is violating state water law at Cannon AFB**

By Laura Paskus



*Cannon AFB courtesy photo: VIRIN: 101010-F-YG475-003.JPG*

At Cannon Air Force Base, the 27th Special Operations Mission Support Group provides combat support and base sustainment services to ensure mission readiness.

The state of New Mexico says the U.S. Air Force needs to immediately develop a plan to protect dairies from chemicals at Cannon Air Force Base.

The New Mexico Environment Department announced today that Cannon Air Force Base near Clovis is violating the state's Water Quality Act and related ground and surface water regulations. The state agency issued a Notice of Violation, which requires the Air Force to create a plan to protect local dairies from contamination in the short-term and also evaluate the possibility of installing systems to treat contaminated water supplies.

If the military fails to comply, New Mexico can issue civil penalties of up to \$15,000 per day for each violation.

Chemicals from fire fighting training activities have been found in the groundwater below Cannon, and in groundwater wells off-base.

As [NM Political Report](http://nmpoliticalreport.com/2018/11/09/cannon-afb-water-contamination-on-tap-in-friday-night-meeting/) (<http://nmpoliticalreport.com/2018/11/09/cannon-afb-water-contamination-on-tap-in-friday-night-meeting/>) wrote earlier this year, this summer, the Air Force announced it was sampling groundwater wells for traces of harmful chemicals found within firefighting foam used at the base from the 1970s until last year.

The testing was part of a nationwide effort by the military after the U.S. Department of Defense announced that activities at 126 military bases had contaminated groundwater with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, a class of human-made chemicals, often referred to as PFAS's, that includes perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS).

In response to new understandings about the chemicals and their effects, in 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established new guidelines for exposure. The human health advisory set the lifetime drinking water exposure limit at 70 parts per

trillion, or 70 nanograms per liter.


At Cannon Air Force Base, groundwater monitoring wells detected concentrations exceeding 26,000 nanograms per liter. And in off-base wells, including those that supply drinking water to dairies, they detected levels ranging from 25 to 1,600 nanograms per liter.


**According to an October press release** ([https://www.env.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/PR-CAFB\\_PFAS-groundwater-contamination\\_Eng\\_Span.pdf](https://www.env.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/PR-CAFB_PFAS-groundwater-contamination_Eng_Span.pdf)) **from the state:**


***Residents are encouraged to call the NMDOH Epidemiology and Response Division's at (505) 827-0006 for consultation about the results of their well water test, or for information about how to get their well water tested.***


***Se recomienda a los residentes que llamen a la línea de llamadas de la División de Epidemiología y Respuesta de NMDOH al (505) 827-0006 para consultar sobre los resultados del análisis de agua de su pozo o para obtener información sobre cómo realizar un análisis de agua de su pozo.***


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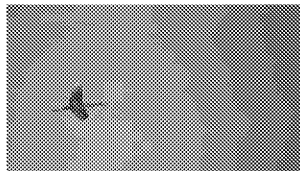
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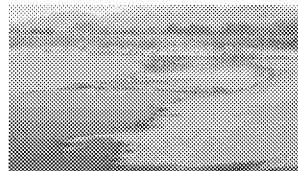
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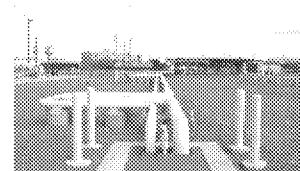
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# Coast Guard and Taylor Energy disagree over source of 14-year Gulf oil leak

Updated Dec 5, 2:08 PM;  
Posted Dec 5, 2:08 PM



A U.S. Coast Guard boat floats near an oily sheen floating over the Taylor Energy platform site in the Gulf of Mexico.

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**By Tristan Baurick, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune,**

[tbaurick@nola.com](mailto:tbaurick@nola.com)

The Times-Picayune



The U.S. Coast Guard isn't buying Taylor Energy's explanation about what's causing the oil company's 14-year-old leak in the Gulf of Mexico.

Scientists hired by Taylor Energy say an oil-soaked area of seafloor is producing a large sheen that frequently appears on the water's surface near the site of the company's damaged MC-20 Saratoga oil platform. But in a letter sent to Taylor Energy, Coast Guard officials countered that there's not enough oil in the seafloor to produce the tens of thousands of gallons they say are seeping from the site each day. The cause, according to the Coast Guard, is one or more leaky wells that were damaged when Hurricane Ivan toppled the platform in 2004.

The Coast Guard recently ordered Taylor Energy to fix the problem or face fines of up to \$40,000 per day. The order was prompted by a new estimate that put the daily release of oil between 10,500 to 29,000 gallons. Added up over 14 years, the platform has produced one of the largest and longest-running oil spills in North America, according to estimates cited by the Coast Guard.

The new leak estimates are far larger than the ones Taylor Energy provided federal authorities over the years, which had characterized the release as little more than a trickle. The Coast Guard had mostly deferred to the oil company until an independent assessment was requested by the U.S. Department of the Interior, which oversees offshore drilling.



Last month, Taylor Energy President Will Pecue said the new leak amounts cited by the Coast Guard are “ridiculous” and “based on erroneous science.” He believes the larger estimates are aimed at bolstering the government’s case for a cleanup or containment operation that could cost up to \$1 billion.

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Christopher Reddy, a marine scientist hired by Taylor Energy, said the wells don’t have enough natural pressure to expel the vast quantities of oil. He said oil that had possibly spilled years ago has saturated the mud around the platform site. According to Reddy, it’s likely that the surface sheens are produced from oil bubbling out of the seafloor sediment. He cautioned that any cleanup work at the site could release a large quantity of oil. Most sheens are produced when the seafloor is disturbed, Taylor Energy officials say.

Federal environmental agencies have calculated that the site’s sediment contains between 97,000 and 346,000 gallons of oil. According to the Coast Guard, “these volumes are insufficient to be a source of the oil releases.” If all the oil



in the sediment had been released over the past eight years, the average daily release would be just a few dozen gallons per day. That's a tiny fraction of the daily estimate in the Interior Department's review.

"Therefore, it is not feasible that the source of the oil sheens could only be remnant oil being released from the sediments only," the Coast Guard letter said.

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The Coast Guard wants temporarily leak containment while a longterm solution is devised. Sonar surveys have pinpointed the main source of the oil to a pit that frequently erupts with natural gas and oil droplets. On Nov. 19, the Coast Guard hired Couvillion Group, a marine construction company in Belle Chasse, to conduct a site survey and build an oil containment and collection system for the site. The system could be installed in early 2019, depending on weather and sea conditions. Coast Guard spokeswoman Lauren Jorgensen said the process is expected to move at a fast pace.





“We plan to leverage every weather window we have from now until the system is in place, and ultimately, the source has been secured and the oil has been recovered,” she said.

*Tristan Baurick covers Louisiana's coastal environment for NOLA.com / The Times-Picayune. Email: [tbaurick@nola.com](mailto:tbaurick@nola.com) • Twitter: [@tristanbaurick](https://twitter.com/tristanbaurick) • Facebook: [Tristan Baurick](#) and [Louisiana Coastal Watch](#).*

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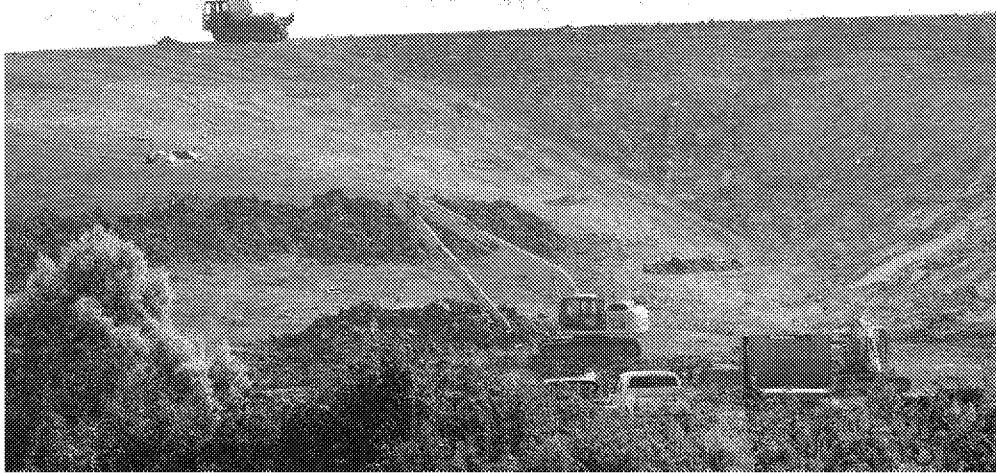


Americans could save thousands by taking advantage of this government program

# Jefferson Parish landfill ID'd as source of River Ridge, Harahan stench, state says

Updated Dec 5, 1:49 PM;

Posted Dec 5, 1:46 PM



Heavy equipment works the clay on the side of an active phase of the Jefferson Parish landfill at Waggaman. (Dinah L. Rogers Photography)

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**By Drew Broach, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune,**

[dbroach@nola.com](mailto:dbroach@nola.com)

The Times-Picayune



Jefferson Parish's landfill was officially identified Wednesday (Dec. 5) as the primary source of persistent odors plaguing River Ridge and Harahan. Still, no relief is guaranteed for residents sickened by the stench - and alarmed by mysterious particulates blowing into their neighborhoods.

Federal, state and local government agencies have failed to end the stink or even fine the responsible parties. But for the first time, after months of investigating 14 industrial sites, Louisiana's Department of Environmental Quality has concluded what many long suspected: The dump is largely to blame for the odor.

"Right now there's no doubt in my mind that the major source is the Jefferson Parish landfill," Environmental Quality Secretary Chuck Carr Brown told the Parish Council.

Airborne particulates are another matter. Some liken them to nighttime snowflakes wafting across homes and vehicles in River Ridge. They're not coming from the landfill but more likely are a fugitive byproduct of grain transfers from barges to ships in the Mississippi River, officials said. Even that is not certain, however, as collection and testing continues.

The disclosures, from Brown and his aides, left some Parish Council members clearly frustrated even as Jefferson spends millions of dollars trying to correct longstanding problems at the Waggaman landfill.



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Residents, too, were irked. “We’re never going to be able to sell our houses,” said Nancy Pearson of River Ridge.

Odor complaints in River Ridge and Harahan began increasing in the summer of 2017 and have escalated this year. Residents say it causes sore throats, spontaneous nosebleeds and headaches.

Almost as troubling is the fear of the unknown, and whether the odors and particulates carry long-term health implications. Straight answers are hard to come by.

Jefferson has hired consultants and contractors to fix the landfill, and clearly much work is underway to fix the infrastructure. Brown said they are making progress and that “we’re at the point now where we should see some improvement” in odor control.

Yet his department’s surveillance division administrator, Mike Algero, also said he “doesn’t see an appreciable difference” in Jefferson’s compliance with environmental regulations.



“Put enough people in jail, and that’ll cure the problem,” said resident Anthony Bloise of Bridge City.

. . . . .

*Drew Broach covers Jefferson Parish politics and education, plus other odds and ends, for NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune. Email: dbroach@nola.com. Facebook: Drew Broach TP. Twitter: drewbroach1. Google+: Drew Broach.*

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## Ag Board considers emergency setback rules for poultry houses

By Kelly Bostian Tulsa World Dec 6, 2018 Updated 8 hrs ago



A chicken farm is seen in Kansas, Oklahoma. MIKE SIMONS/Tulsa World file

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**Health risk: Veteran's family concerned poultry operation near their home will get Ag Department OK**

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**DOCUMENT: Read the proposed rules here**

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The Oklahoma Board of Agriculture is taking public comments online and is set Tuesday to vote on a set of proposed emergency regulations that, in part, would force new large poultry houses to be at least a quarter mile from someone's home or a half mile from a school or incorporated city limits.

After an influx of new poultry house construction the past summer and objections raised by residents of, primarily, Delaware County, the state put a suspension on issuing any new permits for poultry operations on Oct. 8.

If the emergency rules are passed, signed by the governor and do not raise objections from the Legislature, the Agriculture Board intends to lift the suspension so permitting can resume under the new guidelines, said Secretary and Commissioner of Agriculture Jim Reese.

"The suspension is still in place so we are not accepting new applications," he said. "We intend to, if they go into effect, to lift the suspension," he said.

Public comments on the proposed rules are being taken via email to [andrea.bair@ag.ok.gov](mailto:andrea.bair@ag.ok.gov) until 8 a.m. on Monday. The board will meet at 10 a.m. on Tuesday to take up the subject.

A vote that was to take place on the fate of two pending poultry house applications — which were the subject of an angry community meeting Nov. 15 — has been removed from the docket, he said. The new emergency rules could be applied to those two permit applicants.



Chief among the new rules are setback proposals that would require at least a quarter-mile setback of poultry barns, composters or other carcass disposal areas, litter sheds and other buildings associated with operations of 30,000 birds or more. Smaller operations of 30,000 or fewer birds would have a 1,000-foot setback.

“I love that. Maybe that will help some people in the future,” said Tena Doan of Colcord who in the past year had six 66-by-600-foot chicken houses built just 1,000 feet from her front porch and has neighbors just 800 feet from the same operation.

“We need some things set. They’ve got to have some rules because it’s just gotten way out of hand out here,” she said.

Reese said the state of Kansas also has a quarter-mile setback and that Texas has a half-mile setback. Arkansas has no setback regulations, he said. The proposed rules note that they do not apply to operations approved and funded prior to the Oct. 8 suspension.

The Coordinating Council on Poultry Growth — formed in October as an advisory council that includes members of the public, poultry industry and state agencies, and is chaired by Reese and Cherokee Nation Secretary of Natural Resources Sara Hill — was presented with the proposed emergency rules in its last meeting, Reese said.

“We discussed it last Wednesday and gave them until the end of the week to get back with us on any recommendations or considerations,” he said.

Pam Kingfisher, organizer of Green Country Guardians, said the new guidelines fall short on several marks, including addressing the question of concentrations of houses in small areas, and that no protections are offered churches, graveyards, parks or historic sites.

A longer setback would be better, and proposed setback guidelines from wellheads and streams (100 feet for a private well, 500 feet from a public well, 200 feet from a stream) fall short, she said.

“It addresses 150 feet from a highway but says nothing about gravel or dirt roads, which is most of what we have here,” she said. “It’s completely inadequate, in my mind. It doesn’t fix anything and is too little, too late, and it’s very sad.”

Rancher Rod Garman of Ground Zero Farms said poultry houses have been built within 500 feet of some homes near his ranch, so this would have been an improvement for those residences, but he added that the concentrations of poultry farms needs to be addressed.

“What happens is we had them right next to us, yes, and we could smell them but it was not an air quality issue. Then they built six more across from us, then the second six and it was horrendous, and there are now 12 more in that same section that don’t even have birds in them yet,” he said. “In a 1-mile section we have 24 houses 60-by-600 feet, and in the next mile section there are another 40.

"I don't mind the houses and I don't even want to even stop them coming, but I just don't want the concentrations of them," he said.

Reese said the proposed emergency rules will not mark the end of the Coordinating Council or the end of the issue for the Agriculture Department.

"This will address some of the more immediate concerns," he said.

"It's certainly not the end. It's a step to move forward."



Read the proposed rules here  
16 hrs ago

[http://newtoncountytimes.com/news/epa-proposed-approval-of-state-haze-plan/article\\_905206f4-f709-11e8-b7dc-333ca5facbcb.html](http://newtoncountytimes.com/news/epa-proposed-approval-of-state-haze-plan/article_905206f4-f709-11e8-b7dc-333ca5facbcb.html)

TOP STORY

## EPA proposed approval of state haze plan

21 hrs ago

NORTH LITTLE ROCK —The Region 6 Office of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed approval of key portions of the State's Regional Haze plan. The plan, which includes agreements to limit sulfur dioxide and particulate emissions, was signed by Arkansas's key utility partners: Entergy Arkansas, Inc., Southwestern Electric Power Company, and Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Corporation. In conjunction with EPA's proposed approval of portions of the Regional Haze SIP, EPA is also withdrawing the corresponding federal haze plan provisions. The approval is a key step in resolving the issues surrounding Arkansas's challenge to EPA's 2016 federal haze plan.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/11/30/2018-26073/approval-and-promulgation-of-implementation-plans-arkansas-approval-of-regional-haze-state>

"We're pleased with EPA's positive response to return control of the Regional Haze Program to the state and look forward to ongoing cooperation," Director Becky W. Keogh said. "This plan is an example of Arkansas's commitment to lasting environmental and visibility improvements in our scenic vistas, the Buffalo Wilderness Area and Caney Creek."

The state plan saves roughly two billion dollars in costs to Arkansas ratepayers as compared with the federal haze plan while also achieving the state's goals for improving visibility for this ten- year period. As part of the state plan, Entergy Arkansas, Inc. has agreed to use low-sulfur coal until their proposed plan to discontinue coal usage at Entergy White Bluff is fully realized. Additionally, as a long-term improvement strategy in this plan Entergy Arkansas, Inc. has agreed to implement low-sulfur coal restrictions at Entergy Independence.

The Regional Haze Program seeks to address the combined visibility effects of various pollution sources over a wide geographic region with the goal of achieving natural visibility conditions at designated national parks and wilderness areas. The State's Phase I Regional Haze plan was approved by EPA on February 12, 2018. That plan provides for control of nitrogen oxide emissions from the State's electric generating fleet through participation in the Cross State Air Pollution Rule.

Economics

# Trump Aims to Lift Hurdle to Coal Plants No One Wants to Clear

By Jennifer A Dlouhy

December 6, 2018, 3:00 AM GMT-6

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- ▶ EPA to propose ending mandate for carbon-capture technology
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*Photographer: Luke Sharrett/Bloomberg*

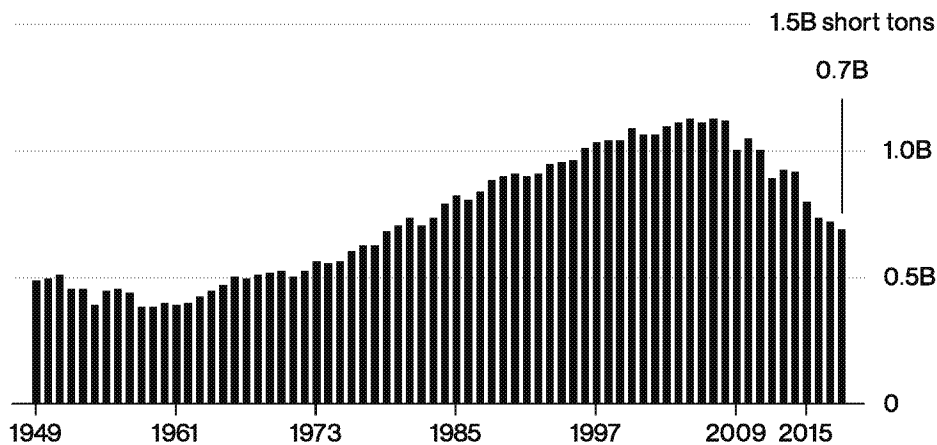
The Trump administration is removing a key barrier to constructing new coal-fired power plants in the U.S. -- but don't expect any utilities to actually build them.

The Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday is set to propose easing Obama-era limits on carbon dioxide emissions from new and modified coal power plants that effectively required the use of expensive carbon-capture technology.

Although that regulatory mandate was one obstacle to building coal power plants, economic and market realities have created much higher hurdles, which analysts say will endure no matter what the Trump administration does.

## Burning Out

U.S. coal consumption in 2018 is on pace to be the lowest in 39 years



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

“It’s doubtful the proposed policy change will make much of a difference to any potential coal power plant developers,” said Rob Barnett, an analyst with Bloomberg Intelligence. “The economics of building a new coal plant just don’t make sense given the availability of abundant and cheap natural gas” that has helped make new coal plants “among the most expensive electricity options at this point.”

Two years into Donald Trump’s presidency, despite regulatory steps to improve coal’s fortunes, U.S. producers are still losing domestic customers as other environmental regulations and economic pressures encourage utilities to embrace cleaner-burning natural gas and zero-emission renewables.

Read more: As World Edges Away From Coal, Trump Seeks Revival

Since 2010, power plant owners have either closed or announced plans to close at least 630 coal plants in 43 states -- nearly 40 percent of the U.S. coal fleet, according to data by the American

Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, a trade group representing utility Southern Co., Peabody Energy Corp., a major coal miner, and other companies.

The coming EPA proposal would relax carbon dioxide limits on new and modified plants that couldn't meet them without installing some kind of technology to capture the emissions. But it may do little more than deliver a psychic boost to the coal industry and reinforce Trump's support for the sector following his campaign promises to revive coal and restore mining jobs.

The Trump administration has already taken regulatory steps to make coal cheaper to mine and more attractive to burn for electricity by reducing regulations yet it's not clear the latest EPA proposal will convince any utilities to take advantage of the change.

"We don't see the EPA's rollback of carbon capture technology and storage requirements sparking any new coal plant openings in the foreseeable future," said Toby Shea, vice president at Moody's Investors Service. "Existing coal plants are being challenged by low-cost natural gas and renewables, and an easing of regulations won't change that."

Xcel Energy Inc., a Minnesota-based utility, on Tuesday pledged to make its electricity carbon-free by 2050 -- by relying on renewable energy and possibly using carbon-capture technology at coal and gas plants.

#### How Trump's Coal Aid Plan Will Raise Power Bills: QuickTake Q&A

"No number of regulatory rollbacks or empty campaign promises to coal miners is going to change the move toward clean energy," said Kenneth Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group, an advocacy organization. "The only variable now is how quickly the transition to an electric system dominated by renewables will occur."

Although carbon capture systems have been deployed at oil refineries and other facilities -- including a coal-fired unit at an NRG Energy Inc. power plant in Texas -- they have not been widely deployed at commercial scale in the electricity sector.

The EPA's proposed replacement would raise carbon dioxide emission limits so they could be satisfied using other, cheaper technologies. The measure will be subject to public comment and could be finalized next year.

The longer term outlook for coal as a power source in the U.S. doesn't get much better. The U.S. Energy Information Administration predicts continued declines in coal's share of the domestic

electricity market -- down to 26 percent next year from 30 percent in 2017.

Despite eroding domestic consumption, U.S. coal production has been buoyed by increased exports. According to the EIA, the U.S. is expected to harvest 756 million short tons of coal this year -- down slightly from 774 million last year but modestly up from the 728 million short tons produced in 2016, before Trump took office.

Coal exports -- particularly to India and China -- remain the industry's bright spot. The U.S. exported 78 million short tons of coal during the first eight months of 2018, compared with 60 million short tons during the same period last year, according to EIA.

Trump's policy changes -- including the coming EPA proposal -- may help on the margins, but the president can't take credit for the coal sector's current production levels, said Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Andrew Cosgrove.

"It's doing great, but it's not because of him," Cosgrove said. "It has nothing to do with him."

– *With assistance by Joe Ryan*

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**DALLAS NEWS**  
by The Dallas Morning News



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≡ **ALL SECTIONS**

George H.W. Bush (1924-2018)

Remembering the 41st President of the United States

COMMENTARY   YESTERDAY

## In southern Dallas, a toxic Superfund site where answers remain years away



*Robert Wilonsky, City Columnist*

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This is the first in what I can only assume will be a series about a piece of toxic land in southern Dallas. I say the first because the Environmental Protection Agency is only now preparing a plan to study the ground and water at the site of Lane Plating Works, a name that has become an obscenity to people who live nearby.

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On a bucolic stretch of Bonnie View off Loop 12 — near schools and a baseball diamond and creeks running through a forest down to the Trinity River — sits a facility that used to electroplate, among other things, car parts and plumbing fixtures. The site has been here since 1950, when F.E. Lane moved his business, which he started in 1926, from Hall Street to 5 acres of family land where cattle once grazed.

Not much appears to have changed. Two Sundays ago, I saw seven skinny horses scrounging for something to eat in a pasture absent much edible vegetation. It felt like a vestigial remnant of the Old West, except Lane Plating's worries are decidedly of the modern world.

On that land but a few minutes south of downtown, federal and state investigators say, Lane Plating deposited arsenic, hexavalent chromium, cadmium, mercury, lead — awful-sounding, awful-doing things found in high levels. Almost 200,000 pounds of chemical waste have already been removed from the site "to eliminate the imminent threat and substantial endangerment to public health and welfare and the environment posed by on-site hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants," according to a December 2016 EPA report.





How long this poisoning went on, I cannot say. It appears the state didn't get involved until 2011. Four years later, the company shuttered — in Chapter 7 bankruptcy. Its most valuable asset was its land, rendered valueless.

What became of its workers, too, I do not know. My efforts to reach the Lane family proved unsuccessful.

In May, Lane Plating joined the EPA's ignominious list of Superfund sites that we will have to pay to clean up. Just like the old RSR Corp. site in West Dallas — the lead smelters, among the most shameful chapters in this city's history.



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*By Toyota*

Lane Plating isn't the sprawl that RSR was, and it didn't coat whole parts of the city with lead dust. Kenneth Shewmake, the EPA's remedial project manager in charge of this project, told me he believes it's "a good possibility all the contamination has stayed close to the building."

### Grand Prairie industrial site that leaked cancer-causing chemicals under homes gets Feds' attention

But he won't know this for certain for a very long time — years. During which time, nearby residents who only recently found out about the environmental disaster will ask questions to which there won't yet be answers. They will plead. And, if last week's public meeting at the Texas Horse Park is any indication, they will panic.

Because if they don't, no one else will. It's a story with which this part of Dallas is sickeningly familiar.

ADVERTISING

"When it comes to low-income areas, they really don't pay attention to us," said 40-year-old Temeckia Derrough, an environmental activist who has spent half her life living near Lane Plating. Today she resides in nearby Joppa, the former freedman's town obscured by a rail yard, batch plant and asphalt recycling facility.

"When is someone going to actually stand up and protect our health in the city of Dallas?" Derrough said. "They have robbed us of knowledge, and knowledge is power. We've been living around this environmental impact for years, and *no one told us.*"



Lane Plating Works is locked, its owner in bankruptcy and its land contaminated. (Brian Elledge/Staff Photographer)

Officials in Dallas' Office of Environmental Quality say they knew nothing about issues at Lane Plating until about two years ago — shortly before an assistant city manager sent a memo to the mayor and council that says "the city did not cause or contribute to the current conditions at Lane Plating." That was April 2017.

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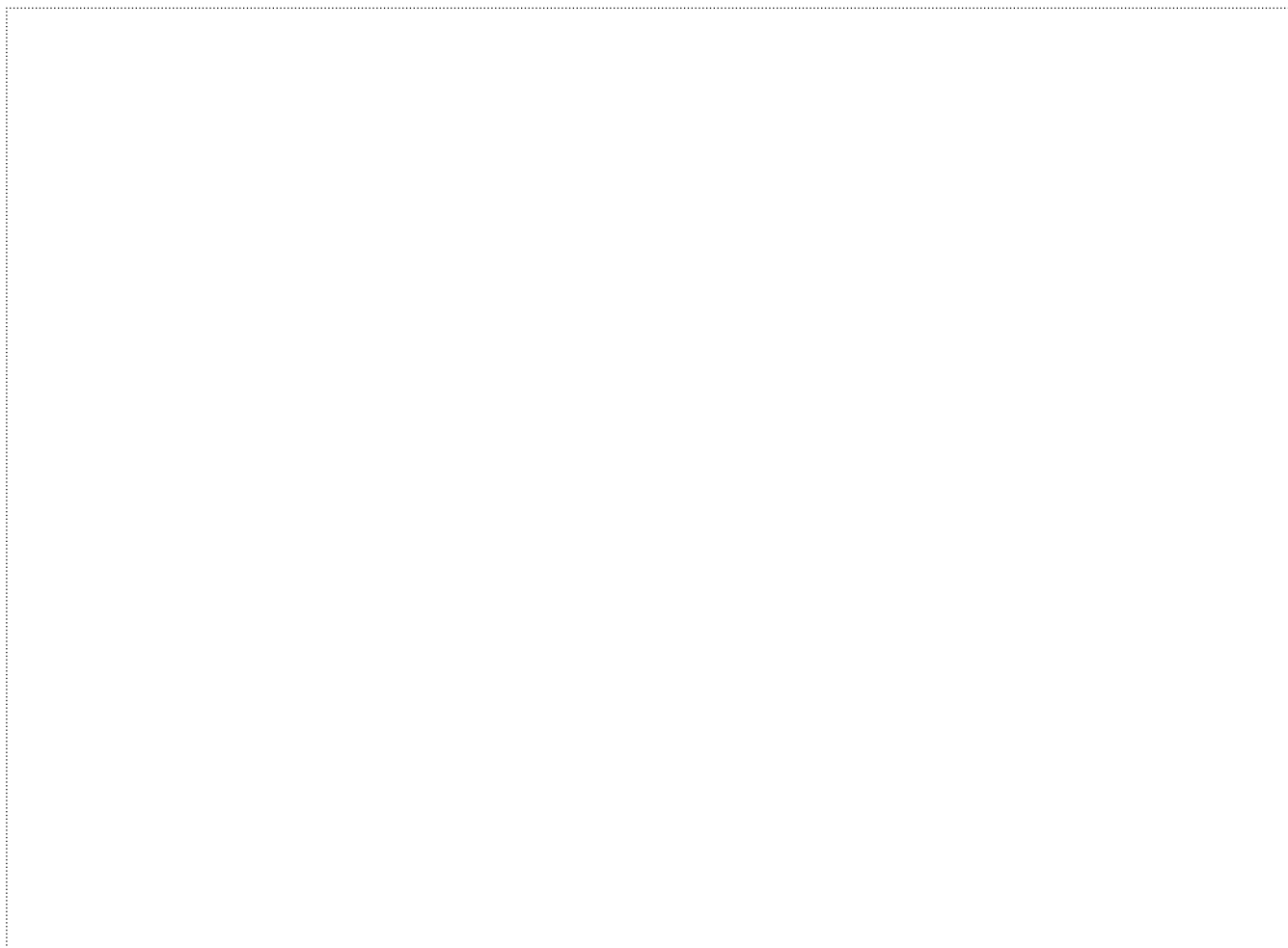
UNITED CONCORDIA

"We did our own internal look to see, did we miss something?" said James McGuire, OEQ's director and a former environmental law attorney. "Was there anything before 2010?"

There was not.

Photo Gallery

1/3



(Brian Elledge/Staff Photographer)



Best I can tell, Lane Plating got its first ding in 2011, after a Texas Commission on Environmental Quality investigation turned up violations involving hazardous waste and toxic chemicals. Four years later, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration fined Lane Plating \$110,000 for 21 "willful" workplace violations that alleged the company "endangered the health and well-being of its employees."

The OSHA news release issued Feb. 3, 2015, began this way:

"The dangers of worker exposure to hexavalent chromium, a known carcinogen that can cause serious long-term health issues, including lung cancer and kidney failure, should have come as no surprise to the Lane Plating Works Inc. owner. Air-monitoring tests told him that workers were being overexposed to the dangerous toxin, but he failed to correct the hazard."

At the end of 2015, Joe Lane, Lane Plating Works' president, filed for bankruptcy. In that filing, it asks: "Does the debtor own or have possession of any real property or personal property that needs immediate attention?" The response said yes; TCEQ was alleging "significant environmental regulation violations" and the state agency had removed "various specific chemicals from the site."

The EPA says it was contacted by TCEQ in March 2016 to perform what is called a removal assessment at Lane Plating. That October, the EPA hauled off 188,000 pounds of waste materials. That was only the beginning.

I asked the EPA's Shewmake if the agency will try to find and interview former employees to see what happened there — and to check on their health. He said that would be something the

county might do. Said Shewmake, the EPA's job is "to address future risk. We can't address past risk."

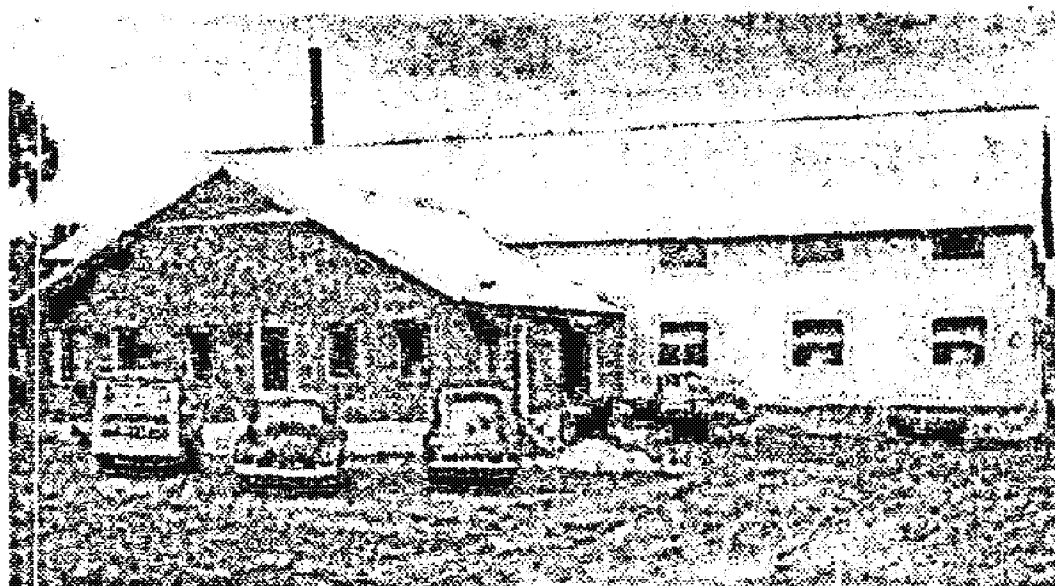
Thursday night, an EPA rep told nearby residents, most living in Joppa, that its sampling plan will be done sometime next year. After that comes the studying of soil, the testing of water, the look to see how widespread the damage was — to see if it reached the Trinity.

Then — maybe two years later, maybe four, it depends on the money — comes the clean-up. And then, the community could be asked what it wants done with what is now and what will be for a long, long time a piece of bad, bad land sitting in their backyards.

[Tales of Dallas from City Columnist Robert Wilonsky](#)

[Lane Plating by Robert Wilonsky on Scribd](#)





—Dallas News Staff Photo.

This is the new home of Lane Plating Works, 5322 Bonnie View Road. The brick building in front houses offices; the plant is in the metal building in back. Frank E. Lane, founder, who designed the quarters, said it is the first plant especially built for plating in Dallas.

### 24-CHAPTER SUCCESS STORY

# Big, New Plant Opened By Lane Plating Works



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# **EPA: Fish damage from mine spill limited**

By Dan Elliott / Associated Press

Wednesday, December 5th, 2018 at 11:35pm

DENVER – Fish and other aquatic life did not suffer severe or long-lasting damage from a mine waste spill three years ago that polluted rivers in three states, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said.

An EPA report released last week analyzed the 2015 spill at the inactive Gold King Mine in southwestern Colorado, which an EPA-led contractor inadvertently triggered.

Rivers in Colorado, New Mexico and Utah were polluted with a bright yellow-orange plume carrying iron, aluminum and other metals.

Part of the Animas River in Colorado closest to the spill was already so polluted by decades of waste spilling from inactive mines that the most vulnerable fish, insects and other aquatic life were already gone, the EPA said.

Further downstream, the spill appeared to have little impact on fish numbers, probably because the pollution was diluted and kept moving, so the exposure did not last long, the report said.

Another factor was that most of the metals in the plume remained in particulate form rather than dissolving in the water, the report said. Particulates are less harmful to aquatic life than dissolved metals.

The EPA's conclusions appear to be sound, said Jason Willis, manager of Trout Unlimited's Colorado Abandoned Mine Land Program. Willis helped gather some of the samples used in the report but was not involved in analyzing them or drawing any conclusions.

The report demonstrates the need to take action on wastewater draining from 250 inactive mines in Colorado and hundreds more in other states, Willis said.

Wastewater was already pouring out of the Gold King Mine at a rate of about 3 million gallons a week, the same amount released in one day by the EPA-triggered spill, Willis said.

“The fact that it was seven days’ worth of Gold King helps put it in perspective,” he said.

The EPA analysis, first reported by the Durango Herald, used samples gathered from the Animas River in Colorado and New Mexico and the San Juan River in New Mexico. The Animas flows into the San Juan near Farmington, New Mexico, about 100 miles downstream from the spill.

The samples were collected in the fall of 2015, after the spill, and again one year later.

## **BC-US–Mine Waste Spill-Fish**

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**EPA: Fish damage from mine spill wasn’t severe, long-lasting**

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## **State Plant Board ready, again, to debate dicamba**

*by Stephen Steed | Today at 3:09 a.m.*

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The state Plant Board expects a full house today when it again considers how, or whether, dicamba can be sprayed on soybeans and cotton next year.

The board will consider two proposals: allowing the herbicide's use, with some restrictions, through June 15, or banning its sale and use.

The board set an April 16 cutoff date for dicamba's use this growing season after receiving about 1,000 complaints in 2017 of damage to crops and other vegetation not tolerant of the herbicide. Even with the April 16 cutoff date, the Plant Board received about 200 complaints of dicamba damage, leading officials to believe a number of farmers violated the ban.

Over the past few days, Audubon Arkansas and a group called Freedom to Farm Foundation Inc. have solicited their members and supporters to either attend the meeting or contact Plant Board members to oppose the herbicide's use next summer.

"Audubon Arkansas is against the use of dicamba past April 15," Dan Schieman, the group's bird conservation director, wrote in an email.

"As the weather warms, this herbicide's volatility increases, meaning even days later it can drift onto nearby native plants, which in turn can harm birds and pollinators. Harmful effects on honeybees have already been documented in Arkansas!"

The Freedom to Farm group took out full-page color ads in Wednesday's *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* and in newspapers in Jonesboro, Blytheville, Osceola and West Memphis stating similar opposition to a proposal that would allow dicamba's use though June 15 on varieties of cotton and soybeans tolerant of the herbicide.

Robert McLarty, a Little Rock consultant for Freedom to Farm, said the 1-year-old organization is based on Facebook, with about 900 "members" who are organic farmers, owners of farm-to-table restaurants

and organizers of farmers' markets.

"We take funds from wherever we can take funds, whether it's \$10 or \$500," McLarty said.

Also expected at the meeting is a heavy contingent of farmers who plant dicamba-tolerant crops and say the chemical is key to their fight against weeds now resistant to other herbicides.

The June 15 cutoff date was part of a group of farmers' "petition for rulemaking" filed Oct. 15.

The full board voted 11-4 on Nov. 5 to send the petition to its pesticide committee for consideration and, if needed, any revisions. The pesticide committee on Nov. 26 voted 4-0 in favor of the June 15 date but also set stricter buffers than those sought by farmers.

Neither the board nor its pesticide committee has addressed the other petition, a proposal to ban the herbicide's use.

The Plant Board is required by law to address such formal petitions. Either proposal, if approved by the board, also would be subject to a 30-day comment period and then sent to a public hearing. Legislative approval, along with the governor's approval, also would be required for new pesticide regulations.

Shawn Peebles, a Woodruff County farmer who grows 1,500 acres of certified organic soybeans, corn, sweet potatoes and green beans, filed the petition seeking a ban on the herbicide. Some 75 farmers and others signed on.

ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW

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Off-target movement of dicamba last year got within 30 feet of Peebles' organic operations. Had even a small part of his crops gotten a dose of the herbicide, his entire operation would have been jeopardized, Peebles said.

Otis Howe, the Plant Board chairman, said Wednesday that he expects a big crowd for the 1:30 p.m. meeting at the board's headquarters in Little Rock. He and other members have received "lots of emails" the past couple of days, Howe said.

In retrospect, Howe said, the board should have rescheduled the meeting for a morning start time.

The board's bylaws require nine votes -- a majority of its 16 voting members -- to either approve or reject a petition. Howe said Wednesday that he wasn't aware of any members who won't be participating in today's meeting.

A long agenda -- with the two dicamba proposals, a presentation by a weed scientist on his dicamba field trials this summer, committee reports, consideration of bylaws for the board and other business -- could extend the meeting into the evening, Howe said. The board could also recess and take up remaining issues later, possibly next week, he said.

The agenda was revised this week to allow a presentation by Jason Norsworthy, a weed scientist with the University of Arkansas System's Division of Agriculture. Norsworthy is among several weed scientists across the South and Midwest who say dicamba's volatility -- or tendency to lift itself off plants as a vapor or gas hours or days after application and move to susceptible crops -- can't be fixed by buffer zones, spray nozzles or more training for applicators.

Monsanto, now owned by Bayer, genetically modified soybeans and cotton to be tolerant of dicamba and developed new dicamba formulations that are supposed to be less volatile. BASF and DowDupont also manufacture or sell the new dicamba formulations. The three companies have attributed most of the problems to errors by applicators.

Despite the crop damage in Arkansas and other soybean-producing states the last three growing seasons, the federal Environmental Protection Agency on Oct. 31 said it would allow dicamba's in-crop use through the 2020 growing season. Herbicide manufacturers typically get "labels" for their products that last 10 or 15 years. States can tighten, but not loosen, the EPA regulations.

Emails obtained by the *Democrat-Gazette* last month through the state's Freedom of Information Act showed that EPA weed scientists recommended in-field buffers as much as 443 feet, to help protect endangered species of plants and animals. Ultimately, the agency set the new buffers at 57 feet where endangered species may exist and carried over 110-foot downwind buffers from this year's regulations.

*Metro on 12/06/2018*

*Print Headline: State Plant Board ready, again, to debate dicamba*

# Regulators' Dicamba Angst


Confusion, Frustration on Display as State Regulators Confront EPA Over Dicamba Rules

12/4/2018 | 10:43 AM CST



By Emily Unglesbee, DTN Staff Reporter

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State regulators are criticizing the language and enforceability of the new dicamba labels, which come as many agencies still face backlogged dicamba investigations from 2017 and 2018. (DTN file photo)

ARLINGTON, Va. (DTN) -- State pesticide regulators confronted EPA representatives over the new dicamba registrations for XtendiMax, FeXapan and Engenia in a public regulatory meeting on Monday, Dec. 3.

Officials representing states in the Midwest and South voiced concerns about a second year of overwhelming dicamba injury complaints, as well as confusing language and requirements in the new dicamba labels, during an annual meeting of the State FIFRA Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG) in Arlington, Virginia.

"The vagueness of some of the terminology on the labels is unfortunate," said Leo Reed, pesticide licensing manager for the Office of Indiana State Chemist. Last year, the EPA consulted with state regulators before releasing its new dicamba labels, he noted.

"It's unfortunate that did not happen this time. You put us in a bad spot in doing that," Reed said.

Dan Kenny, herbicide branch chief for EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs, painted a picture of a rushed, overwhelmed bureaucracy leading up to the Halloween night decision to extend dicamba registrations for two years.

Data and information on dicamba continued to stream into the agency through October, Kenny told the state regulators.

"By the time we actually had a decision to propose, it was well into the end of October, and unfortunately we had pretty much run out of time...we were actually running against the deadline for when the registrations expired," he said. "So unfortunately, we were not able to vet proposals with the states as we hoped we would."

The result has been widespread confusion over how to interpret and enforce parts of the new labels among state regulators, even as many still work to finish up costly backlogged dicamba investigations.

## A CRUSH OF COSTLY DICAMBA CASES

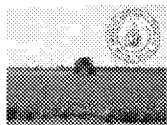
Missouri state regulators have not even finished processing their 2017 dicamba complaint cases, and do not expect to start reviewing the state's 216 cases from 2018 for nine to 12 months, reported Tim Creger, manager of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture's pesticide/fertilizer program, who serves as a representative for EPA's Region 7 states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska for SFIREG.

Dicamba complaint investigations have also proved extremely costly to states. Reed estimates the Office of Indiana State Chemist spent \$1.2 million investigating 141 dicamba complaints in 2018. Creger said

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States and Dicamba

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11/1/2018 | 6:36 PM CDT

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his agency spent over half a million dollars on dicamba response this year, an amount also echoed by Tom Gere, with the South Dakota Department of Agriculture.

"I didn't have that in my budget," Creger told EPA. "... Now I'm looking at two more years of the same situation and I can't afford that -- I can't afford it financially and I can't afford it in staff time."

Nebraska's pesticide regulators are facing "a significant erosion of credibility" in the state, because they have had to abandon routine inspections in order to chase down 95 dicamba complaints in 2017 and 106 in 2018, Creger added. "We're at a threshold where we've got to make a serious decision of whether we ignore dicamba and let people get harmed and suffer, so that we can get back to our routine inspection programs that brings our enforcement credibility up," he said.

Reed agreed. "It's untenable," he said of the 2017-18 seasons in Indiana. "We can't continue to go down that path."

The crush of investigations has caused personnel issues, as well, said Creger. "States are losing quality employees, both in the field and in the office, due to the overload of complaints and case reviews," he wrote in his pre-meeting report to SFIREG. For example, the Missouri Department of Agriculture has lost half its field inspectors, and is having trouble rehiring, Creger told the EPA at the meeting.

## CERTIFICATION CRISIS

Some states, such as Illinois, are scrambling to get applicators ready for EPA's new requirement that only certified applicators be permitted to apply dicamba in 2019. EPA is standing by this new regulation, including a controversial section requiring certification even for employees who mix, load or clean dicamba from equipment, Kenny said.

In Texas, this requirement is running into language barriers, said Leslie Smith, an official with the Texas Department of Agriculture's pesticide division.

"It will have a huge impact on a lot of our farmers," she said. "... Some of their workers can't read English well enough to pass the exams, and we don't have exams in Spanish because the labels are in English."

SFIREG is setting up a working group with EPA to clarify this new requirement. But state regulators are running out of time, as many must get thousands of state applicators certified in just a few months before dicamba spraying begins again in the spring.

"I hope the working group can address those issues in a timely way, because states aren't going to have enough resources to train all those folks to have enough qualified applicators," Richard Gupton, of the Agricultural Retailers Association, told EPA.

#### BUFFER CONFUSION

A number of state regulators also expressed confusion over the new 57-foot buffers in place for dicamba applications in counties with certain endangered broadleaf plant species. EPA is directing all applicators to check a county's status on a website called Bulletins Live (<https://www.epa.gov/>), but some have struggled to access the website.

"We found out that it doesn't work with all web browsers," noted Nebraska's Creger, "... And when you find one that does work, it takes an enormous amount of time and broadband width to pull down one of those bulletins."

"Most of our rural areas have to use satellite internet connections," in Texas, Smith added.

Nor does the website specify which endangered species are prompting the need for the buffer, which will likely frustrate applicators, Creger added.

#### 24-C QUESTION REMAINS

EPA continued to waffle on the question of whether or not states would be permitted to use Section 24(c) labels, to make changes to the federal dicamba labels.

Smith said northern Texas cotton producers need to be able to spray beyond the 60-day post-planting restriction. In South Dakota, Gere said, many state agricultural organizations have urged his agency to enact an earlier cutoff date.

When pressed for clarity on whether or not these types of actions would be permitted via 24(c), Kenny said, "I don't have a carte blanche answer for you right now, but I would say that if you're considering 24(c), [Office of Pesticide Programs] is recommending very strongly that you come talk to us."

See more details on EPA's new stance on state use of Section 24(c) here: <https://www.dtnpf.com/>...

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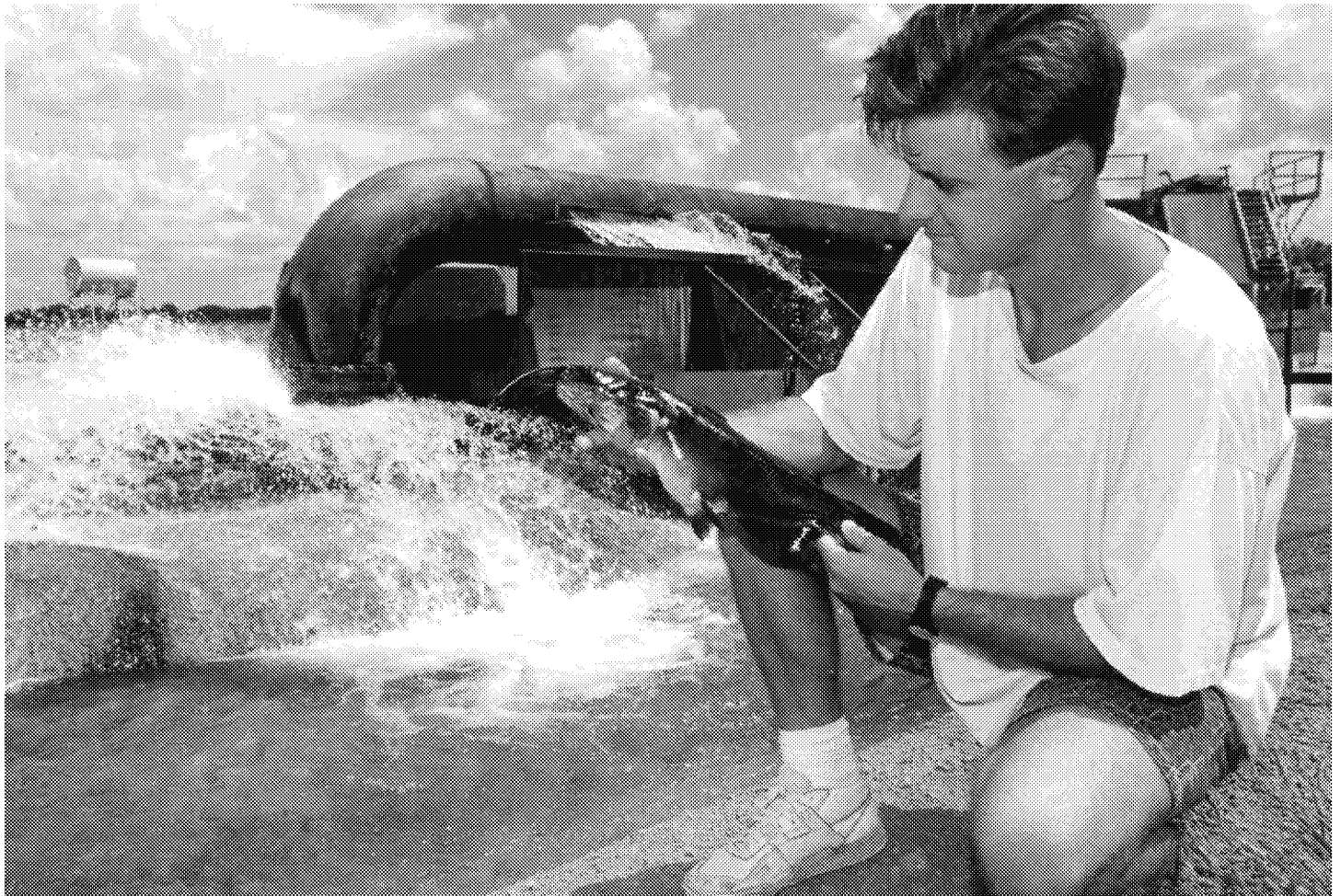


NEWS

## San Antonio's infamous catfish farm's well to be capped

By Bruce Selcraig, Staff writer

Dec. 4, 2018 | Updated: Dec. 5, 2018 5:33 p.m.



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Ned Pucek holds up a catfish from his Living Waters Artesian Springs Catfish Farm in May 1992.

Photo: Bob Owen /San Antonio Express-News

Among thickets of prickly pear and pecan trees 20 miles south of downtown, a bizarre chapter in Texas water law involving a catfish farm and its infamously abundant well finally is being capped — literally.

In 1991, the owner, Ronnie Pucek, brought national attention to the region's groundwater politics — for years, a three-way tug-of-war between municipal, agricultural and environmental interests — when he fed his Living Waters Artesian Springs Catfish Farm with some 45 million gallons a day from the Edwards Aquifer.

The gusher was deemed the world's largest artesian well — the water pushed to the surface by gravity-induced pressure — and yielded enough water to serve a town of 250,000, or nearly a fourth of San Antonio's population at the time.

A decade of litigation led to an eventual \$30 million buyout of Pucek and his partners.

Now, the San Antonio Water System has started work to seal off the 30-inch well with oil-field-type mud and concrete, a two-week project costing \$1.4 million.

SAWS plans to return the site to its native brushland.

"When you see it, it is just a water well," SAWS project coordinator Kevin Morrison said Tuesday, standing beside the well's darkened steel gate valve. "But it all had such far-reaching consequences and was the catalyst for changing Texas water law."

Environmentalists and much of the general public were outraged by the catfish farm, but under Texas' "rule of capture" doctrine and the supremacy of property rights in the Lone Star State, well owners still could argue they were entitled to as much water as they wished to pump.

Pucek was unavailable for comment Tuesday. Two years after he opened his 85-acre farm — it only stayed active one season — the Legislature created the Edwards Aquifer Authority, or EAA.

The action forestalled the legal threat of a federal takeover of the aquifer under the Endangered Species Act, which already had been invoked in litigation to guarantee the aquifer's major springs as habitat for several protected species.

Then-U.S. District Judge Lucious Bunton pushed lawmakers toward more responsible water use regulations, and today the majority of Texas is under some form of water management — including about 100 underground water districts.

Steve Clouse, the chief operating officer for SAWS, said the impact of the catfish farm hardly could be overstated.

"At the time, I thought San Antonio's water was being stolen," Clouse said wryly. "I was amazed that we were being told we couldn't just develop with no limits and would have to diversify our water

resources. But I was 100 percent wrong.”

The lawsuit and the EAA moved San Antonio toward “more environmentally sound water policy, and secured our future water in a much more responsible way,” Clouse said. “The catfish turmoil was the tripwire that got us to limit our uses of the Edwards and recognize it is a limited and shared resource.”

In hindsight, Clouse said, the decision by SAWS to spend \$30 million buying the catfish farm and its water rights was “brilliant,” because those rights likely would cost more than \$120 million today.

In 2013, SAWS sold the land to the San Antonio River Authority for \$315,000, but maintained an easement so it could manage the infamous well.

SAWS is capping it permanently because the temporary cap it has used for some years eventually could deteriorate, making the well all but uncontrollable.

For a water engineer, said SAWS’ Morrison, working on the well site has been memorable. The well was 1,670 feet deep and was perhaps “the luckiest shot in the world,” producing a daily volume about 45 times what a San Antonio golf course would use on a summer day, he said.

Workers with Weisinger Inc., a Willis-based drilling firm, plan to “kill” the well by pumping a slurry of bentonite clay mud, the mineral barite and water into its depths to neutralize the artesian flow.

They then will dump tons of 3/4-inch washed limestone gravel into the well and a cavern at the bottom whose size is unknown.

Last, said Morrison, they will pour into the hole a cement mixture that contains 6 percent bentonite.

“It should be hard and set in about 12 hours,” he said, noting there are plenty of similarities between this job and oil field work.

“But it’s also a whole different ball game,” he said, referring to the amazing volume of water the well is capable of spewing. “What do you think those oil guys would do if they had a well flowing at 37,000 gallons a minute?”

*Bruce Selcraig is a staff writer in the San Antonio and Bexar County area. Read his stories on our free site, [mySA.com](http://mySA.com), and on our subscriber site, [ExpressNews.com](http://ExpressNews.com). | [BSelcraig@express-news.net](mailto:BSelcraig@express-news.net)*

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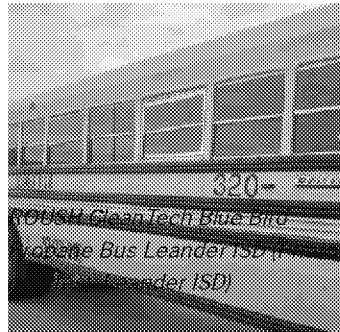
Williamson County

## New Leander ISD buses powered by propane, equipped with air conditioning

By:

[Erin Cargile](https://www.kxan.com/meet-the-team/erin-cargile/882318406) (https://www.kxan.com/meet-the-team/erin-cargile/882318406) ✉ (mailto:erin.cargile@kxan.com)

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LEANDER, Texas (KXAN) — Two dozen brand new school buses in the Leander Independent School District are better for the environment and cheaper to run. And while it's not needed this time of year, parents should be happy to hear they came equipped with air conditioning.

Many families put up a fight when classes started in the fall after learning their children were riding home from school in 100-plus degree temperatures with no a/c. A few weeks later the district vowed to have a/c on all buses by the summer of 2019 using bond money and a state grant.

- **Lack of A/C on Leander ISD school buses leaves kids drenched**

A \$740,000 grant from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality enabled the district to buy 24 "Blue Bird Vision Propane" buses. They run on a propane fuel system which the company says produces low nitrogen oxide emissions that are 75-percent cleaner than the EPA emissions standard.



"The impact of our school bus fleet on the environment is a big concern because many of our community members live in an environmentally sensitive area," said Ann Hatton, director of transportation for Leander ISD. "They appreciate that our school district is adopting a cleaner transportation option in propane."

LISD has been using Blue Bird's propane-fueled buses since 2008, and now has a grand total of 127 of them which equates to 30-percent of the entire fleet.

One of the benefits of school districts using propane buses is the cost savings. Currently, the school district pays 45-percent less for propane than diesel fuel.

"I am pleased that our choice of an alternative fuel can help put money back into the classroom," said Hatton.

The district plans to double its number of propane buses over the next five years.

[Click here to read more on LISD's overall plan and timeline to equip all school buses with air conditioning.](#)

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# Wildlife Advocates Want Ban On 'Cyanide Bombs'

By [BRYCE DIX \(/PEOPLE/BRYCE-DIX\)](#) • 15 HOURS AGO



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Oscar Sutton via UNSPLASH



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1:05

The public can now weigh in on whether to ban controversial 'cyanide bombs' that federal officials use for wildlife control.

The 'cyanide bombs' are called M44's and they're used to kill wild animals that harm livestock. The EPA is reviewing the use of cyanide in wildlife management (<https://archive.epa.gov/pesticides/reregistration/web/pdf/3086.pdf>), and advocates want to see it banned.


Collette Adkins said there's no guarantee that the animals that are targeted, coyotes for example, are the ones that are killed. She is with the Center for Biological Diversity. (<http://centerforbiologicaldiversity.org>)

"The real problem with these devices is that they're indiscriminate because anything can tug on that device", said Adkins. "Anything that comes by can be killed by it. They're just too dangerous to have on our public lands."


In New Mexico since 2010, 315 animals were killed by M-44 cyanide bombs even though they weren't the targeted animals according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (<http://center.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=92bfe346a547464c8e44c01583fe6eb1>).

People can be at risk, too. Last year, a teenage boy in Idaho was temporarily blinded from an M44 and his dog was killed.


The EPA is taking public comment (<http://www.regulations.gov/comment?D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2010-0752-0095>) through February 4th.


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